

PPM 450 INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

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Purpose

This chapter describes the requirements for developing and maintaining a consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

¹ Policy and Procedure Manual Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services • Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

Policies and Procedures

450.01 IPE Requirement

An IPE helps a consumer achieve a specific employment outcome that is consistent with the consumer's informed choice, vocational strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests. The Counselor must use the requirements of this chapter to ensure that an IPE is developed, implemented, and kept current for all eligible consumers.

If the state is operating under an Order of Selection, the Counselor should not develop an IPE for a consumer on the deferred services waiting list.

The Counselor must document all activities and decisions related to the implementation of the IPE in the consumer's record of services.

450.02 Information Used to Develop the IPE

The employment outcome and VR services included in the consumer's IPE must be based on information obtained for the eligibility assessment, including the application process, the eligibility determination, the severity determination, and the comprehensive assessment.

450.03 Timeliness

The IPE must be completed, approved, and initiated within 120 calendar days of the date when a consumer becomes eligible for services. This timeline may be extended only if the Counselor and consumer agree on a clearly defined extension before the 120 day requirement has expired. The Counselor must document the length of any extension and its justification in the consumer's record of services.

450.04 Notification Requirement

The Counselor must notify the consumer in writing of the IPE requirements prior to the development of a plan. The notification must contain information about the development of the IPE, including all of the following:

1. The availability of assistance for completing required program forms, if needed.
2. The consumer's right to review VR decisions through mediation and a formal appeal proceeding (see PPM 320).
3. The services available through the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and instructions for contacting CAP (see PPM 310).

450.05 Options for Developing an IPE

The consumer may choose to develop his or her IPE with or without assistance from any other person or entity, or with or without the assistance of the Counselor. However, the Counselor is ultimately responsible for approving the content of the IPE and ensuring its timely completion.

The IPE must be in writing and prepared on official VR forms.

450.06 Opportunities to Exercise Informed Choice

The Counselor must assure that the consumer has opportunities for full and meaningful participation in every aspect of the IPE development, including the following:

1. The employment outcome goal and setting.

2. The necessary VR services and settings.
3. The service providers.
4. The methods by which services are secured.

The Counselor must provide the consumer information necessary to make an informed choice about VR services needed to accomplish the IPE. The information must include as much of the following information as is available:

1. The cost, accessibility, and duration of potential services.
2. Customer satisfaction with those services.
3. The qualifications of and types of services offered by potential service providers.
4. The degree to which services are provided in integrated settings.
5. The outcomes achieved by consumers working with the service providers.

The Counselor may use the following information to assist the consumer in making an informed choice about VR services:

1. Lists of services and service providers.
2. Referrals to other consumers, consumer groups, or disability advisory councils qualified to discuss the services or service providers.
3. Accreditation, certification, licensing, or other qualifications of service providers.

4. Consumer experiences at various work and service provider settings, including the results of customer satisfaction surveys and reports.

450.07 Approval and Effective Date

The Counselor and consumer must approve, sign, and date the IPE, and that date becomes the effective date of the IPE. For new Counselors, the Area Supervisor must review the plan to ensure that it meets all requirements for IPEs and follows all guidelines outlined in the PPM. The Area Supervisor then signs and dates the IPE as approved or returns it to the new Counselor for further work. The Area Supervisor must return the IPE to the new Counselor within five business days of receiving it. The IPE's effective date is the date on which the Area Supervisor signs the IPE.

450.08 Distribution of Copies

The Counselor must permanently retain the original signed IPE and each original signed amendment in the consumer's record of services, and provide the consumer with a copy of the IPE and each amendment.

450.09 Periodic Review

The Counselor and consumer should review the IPE at least annually to assess the following:

- The consumer's progress toward achieving the employment outcome identified by the IPE.
- The need to amend or terminate the IPE.

The Counselor is responsible for ensuring that the review happens at least annually.

Continuation without amendment. After the review, the IPE may continue without an amendment, if appropriate. The Counselor and consumer must agree to the continuation. An IPE may be continued as

many times as needed. A change in service providers does not require an amendment, but the Counselor must note the change in the consumer's record of services.

IPE amendment. After review, the Counselor and consumer must formally amend the IPE if substantial changes are required. The Counselor and consumer must agree to and sign the amendment. ~~The Area Supervisor must also approve and sign the amendment according to the requirements of PPM 450.07.~~ The Counselor and consumer may amend the IPE as many times as needed. An IPE amendment is required if substantial changes include any of the following:

1. Change in the planned employment outcome, including a change from one employment type to another or a change of occupational title (determined by the first six digits of the applicable Dictionary of Occupational Title [DOT] code).
2. Substantial modifications of services, unless delaying the changes to amend the plan would delay job placement or immediate progress toward the employment outcome. In cases where amendment would cause such a delay, the Area Supervisor can approve a service without an amendment. The Counselor must document the Area Supervisor's approval in the consumer's record of services and then ensure that the IPE is properly amended and approved within 10 business days of the change.
3. Changes to the criteria used to evaluate the consumer's progress or to any other IPE provisions that are the consumer's responsibility.

450.10 Mandatory Components of IPEs

Most of the information to be included in an IPE is documented in other sections of this chapter. In summary, each IPE must include the following components:

1. Information identifying the IPE as a rehabilitation plan or a supported employment plan.
2. A description of the consumer's chosen employment outcome that is consistent with the consumer's vocational strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and career interests. The description must include the particular type of profession. Describing an employment outcome only by the work performed, such as "supported employment" or "competitive employment," is too vague, except in the case of "homemaking" or "unpaid family work."
3. The anticipated achievement date of the employment outcome.
4. The specific VR services to be provided under the plan, along with the anticipated beginning and ending dates for each service.
5. The service providers chosen by the consumer to provide each VR service.
6. The method by which each VR service will be procured.
7. The terms and conditions of the IPE for service provision that are the responsibility of VR, the consumer, and the service providers.
8. The criteria used to evaluate the consumer's progress.

9. The terms and conditions for any expected post-employment services (documented prior to closing the record of services for consumers who have successfully achieved an employment outcome).
10. The consumer's right to seek a review of VR decisions through mediation and/or an administrative hearing (see PPM 320).
11. The purpose of CAP and contact information for CAP (see PPM 310).
12. The method by which the IPE was developed as described in PPM 450.05.
13. A statement indicating that the IPE was developed according to the consumer's informed choices about the employment outcome, the VR services, and the service providers.
14. The consumer and Counselor's dated signatures and any other signatures required by PPM 450.07.
15. A statement indicating the consumer has received a copy of the IPE or IPE amendment.
16. The anticipated date of the next review. (The Counselor enters this date into IRIS, and does not need to include it in the hard copy of the plan.)

450.11 Additional Requirements for Supported Employment IPEs

A consumer in a supported employment setting requires the following additional content in his or her IPE:

1. Assurance that the supported employment outcome is in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible, based on the consumer's informed choice.

2. A description of the plan for periodically monitoring the consumer's progress toward meeting the weekly work requirement before transitioning to extended services.
3. A description of the supported employment services that VR will provide, such as job assessment, job development, job coaching, or follow along.
4. Indication that any job skills training will be provided on site.
5. A statement that supported employment services will not extend more than 18 months beyond initial job placement. An extension of VR services must be necessary to achieve the employment outcome. The extension requires a joint agreement by the consumer and Counselor and must be for a specified period of time.
6. A description of any anticipated extended services and the expected service provider (documented prior to closing the record of services).
7. The coordination of VR services listed in the IPE with those of individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

450.12 Additional Requirements for Transitioning Students' IPEs

The Counselor must coordinate a transitioning student's IPE with his or her Individualized Education Plan (IEP). VR services must not duplicate or replace services for which the school bears primary responsibility. See PPM 510 for more information regarding transition services.

Authority: Federal regulations 34 CFR §§361.5(b)(6), (10), (15), (16), (19), (33), (53), (55); 361.13(c); 361.42; 361.45; 361.46; 361.47; 361.50; 361.52; 361.53; 361.54.